

Burma and Bangladesh – Regional Crisis Response

JULY 19, 2023

SITUATION AT A GLANCE

<p>4.5 MILLION</p> <p>People Targeted for Humanitarian Assistance in Burma in 2023</p> <p><i>UN – January 2023</i></p>	<p>1.6 MILLION</p> <p>IDPs in Burma Displaced Since February 2021</p> <p><i>UNHCR – June 2023</i></p>	<p>7.9 MILLION</p> <p>People Adversely Affected by Tropical Cyclone Mocha in Burma</p> <p><i>UNHCR – June 2023</i></p>	<p>962,000</p> <p>Estimated Number of Refugees in Bangladesh</p> <p><i>UNHCR – June 2023</i></p>	<p>1.5 MILLION</p> <p>People Targeted by 2023 Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis Joint Response Plan</p> <p><i>UN – March 2023</i></p>
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- Access restrictions continue to impede the delivery of critical humanitarian assistance to populations affected by Tropical Cyclone Mocha in Burma’s Rakhine State.
- Nearly 140 attacks and other incidents affected health care in Burma between January 1 and May 16, prompting many facilities to close and further restricting civilian access to critical medical care.
- On July 13, the USG announced more than \$74 million in humanitarian funding for the Burma and Bangladesh regional crisis response.



TOTAL U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN FUNDING For the Burma and Bangladesh Response in FY 2023	USAID/BHA ¹	\$195,980,960
	State/PRM ²	\$75,800,000
Total		\$271,780,960

For complete funding breakdown with partners, see detailed chart on page 6

¹ USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA)
² U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM)

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Restrictions on Humanitarian Aid Heighten Adverse Effects of Tropical Cyclone Mocha in Burma

Since early June, access restrictions imposed by military authorities in Burma's Rakhine State have constrained the delivery of critical humanitarian aid, including food, health, nutrition, protection, shelter, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) assistance, to vulnerable populations impacted by Tropical Cyclone Mocha. The tropical cyclone—which made landfall over western Burma on May 14—adversely affected approximately 7.9 million people in the country, with Rakhine State being the most affected area, according to the UN. On June 8, military authorities in Burma suspended travel authorizations for humanitarian organizations to deliver assistance in cyclone-affected Rakhine. These restrictions have exacerbated the severe conditions for cyclone-affected populations in the state as heavy rainfall and resultant flooding continue to impact the area during Burma's monsoon season. On June 12, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Burma, a.i., called on military authorities to reconsider the restrictions and reinstate approvals for humanitarian actors to reach cyclone-affected communities.

Despite access challenges, humanitarian organizations, including U.S. Government (USG) partners, have provided critical assistance to populations affected by Tropical Cyclone Mocha in Burma. Following the cyclone's landfall, humanitarian organizations provided food assistance to approximately 380,000 cyclone-affected people in Rakhine and shelter assistance and relief commodities to more than 144,000 people in Rakhine and nearby areas as of June, according to the UN. Additionally, partners provided health care services for nearly 12,500 people in Rakhine.

MAF Attacks Cause Displacement, Restrict Access to Medical Care

Attacks, primarily by Myanmar Armed Forces (MAF), continue to affect health facilities in Burma, prompting many facilities to close and restricting civilian access to critical medical care. Nearly 140 incidents—including airstrikes, artillery shelling, arson, and arrests of health care workers—affected health care in the country between January 1 and May 16, according to a humanitarian analysis organization. Attacks on health facilities continued in June in southeastern Burma, including a MAF artillery attack on June 14 that damaged a local health clinic and boarding school located in Bago Region's Taungoo district, causing injury to three people. As of mid-June, intensified violence—including attacks on civilians—and the lack of available health facilities in southeastern Burma has driven civilians to cross the Thailand–Burma border to seek treatment for issues including diarrhea, HIV, malaria, malnutrition, and trauma-related injuries, local media reported.

In addition to attacks on health facilities, the MAF detained medical staff in Chin State's Hakha township on May 28, resulting in the closure of a local clinic due to concern for staff safety, according to a humanitarian analysis organization. Moreover, civilian access to medical care in Chin is limited to military-affiliated hospitals, which do not have the capacity to treat individuals and raise security concerns for those visiting the facilities, relief actors report.

WFP Reduces Monthly Rations for Rohingya Refugees in Cox's Bazar

The UN World Food Program (WFP) reduced monthly food assistance rations in June from \$10 to \$8 per person per month for Rohingya refugees residing in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar District—affecting approximately 930,000 people—due to global funding shortages. This represents the second ration reduction in Cox's Bazar by the UN agency in 2023, following an initial reduction from \$12 to \$10 per person per month in March. In addition, the UN agency reduced the available types of food commodities

at e-voucher sites—which permits recipients to select food commodities when redeeming electronic vouchers at assistance outlets—for Rohingya refugees in Cox’s Bazar to maximize existing funding resources. In mid-June, WFP called for approximately \$48 million in additional funding to restore full rations for Rohingya refugees in Cox’s Bazar for the remainder of 2023.

As a result of the ration reductions, households have increasingly adopted negative coping mechanisms to meet basic food needs, such as borrowing money at high interest rates, eating less nutritious food, and skipping meals, WFP reports. More than two-thirds of refugees, or 640,000 people, have reduced their food intake and begun purchasing less nutritious food to maximize caloric intake of their rations, according to WFP. More than 40 percent of children living in Cox’s Bazar were already experiencing malnutrition prior to the reductions in food rations, while the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) estimates that cases of severe acute malnutrition could rise by at least 20 percent by the end of the year.

Following the ration cuts, protection actors have expressed concerns about increased risks related to Rohingya refugee households resorting to extreme coping strategies to meet basic needs, including child labor; forced marriage and other forms of gender-based violence (GBV); and declining attendance at learning centers.

Rise in Violence Drives Protection Concerns in Cox’s Bazar Refugee Camps

Rohingya refugees in camps in Cox’s Bazar are at risk of increasing violence by armed groups, according to non-governmental organizations (NGOs). As of mid-July 2023, incidents of violence have increased by more than 60 percent compared to the same period last year, relief actors report. Human Rights Watch (HRW) documented nearly 30 cases of violence against Rohingya refugees from January to April, including incidents of murder, kidnapping, GBV, and torture. As of early July, armed groups in the camps had killed at least 57 refugees during 2023, according to international media. HRW reports that adequate measures have not been taken to protect refugees in the camps from armed groups. Furthermore, USAID/BHA partners reported in early July that Rohingya refugees are fearful to leave their shelters and access services due to the increasing violence.

USG Announces More Than \$74 Million in Funding for the Burma and Bangladesh Regional Crisis Response

On July 13, U.S. Department of State Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights Uzra Zeya announced more than \$74 million in USG humanitarian assistance for vulnerable populations in Burma, Bangladesh, and the region during a meeting with Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. This new funding—comprising nearly \$50 million from State/PRM for both countries and more than \$24 million from USAID/BHA for Burma—will support food, health, multipurpose cash assistance (MPCA), nutrition, protection, shelter, and WASH services for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Burma; host community members in Bangladesh; and crisis-affected communities in Burma and the region. In total, the USG has provided nearly \$272 million in humanitarian assistance for Burma and Bangladesh in FY 2023, including more than \$17 million for the response to Tropical Cyclone Mocha. Since August 2017, the USG has provided more than \$2.1 billion in humanitarian assistance funding for the Burma and Bangladesh regional response.

Separately, other donors, including the European Commission’s Department for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), Japan, and the UK, announced funding to support humanitarian assistance in Bangladesh during June and July. ECHO announced \$7.7 million for food assistance, Japan announced \$4.4 million for WFP to provide food assistance, and the UK announced nearly \$15 million for humanitarian activities by Start Fund Bangladesh, UNICEF, and WFP. Despite

these recent commitments, the UN’s 2023 Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis Joint Response Plan remains significantly underfunded; as of mid-July, humanitarian donors had contributed approximately \$236 million, meeting less than 30 percent of the appeal’s required \$876 million.

KEY FIGURES



**\$136.3
Million**

In dedicated USAID/BHA
FY 2023 support for
food security activities



12

USG partners
implementing stand-
alone protection
interventions in FY 2023



70,000

Households received tie-
down kits from USG
partners for cyclone and
monsoon prevention

U.S. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

FOOD SECURITY

USAID/BHA provides funding to WFP to deliver emergency food assistance—including cash transfers for food; food vouchers; and in-kind food assistance through local, regional, and international procurement—to populations in Burma and Bangladesh. USAID/BHA also supports complementary nutrition services, as well as coordination and capacity-building activities among other food security actors in the two countries to strengthen response efforts. In addition, State/PRM supports the International Organization for Migration (IOM), UNICEF, UNHCR, and NGO partners to deliver complementary livelihood and nutrition services to refugees and other vulnerable individuals in Bangladesh.

PROTECTION

USAID/BHA and State/PRM support 12 humanitarian partners to address protection concerns among displaced and violence-affected populations throughout Burma; host communities and Rohingya refugees in Cox’s Bazar; and Rohingya refugees residing across Southeast Asia. USG-supported protection activities in Burma and Bangladesh focus on increasing access to protection services such as GBV prevention and response, child-friendly spaces, community-based mental health and psychosocial support, and legal assistance. USG partners also work with the broader humanitarian community in Burma to advocate for access to life-saving humanitarian assistance and promote the delivery of protection services in areas with significant humanitarian access constraints.

SHELTERS AND SETTLEMENTS

USAID/BHA works with partners in Bangladesh to enhance community resilience to cyclones and other natural disasters by conducting disaster risk reduction activities, as well as infrastructure rehabilitation in host communities in Bangladesh’s Bandarban and Cox’s Bazar districts. State/PRM-supported shelter assistance in Bangladesh includes emergency shelter repairs and distribution of shelter materials, such as plastic sheeting to prevent roof leaks, complemented by site coordination capacity-building activities. USG partners also provide cash assistance for host community members and refugees to purchase local shelter materials to improve the resilience of their living spaces to natural disasters. In Burma, UNHCR implements protection-sensitive shelter reconstruction in Rakhine by considering IDPs specific needs in coordination with local actors.



USG partners
implementing critical
WASH programming in
FY 2023

WASH

The USG supports WASH programming in Bangladesh’s Cox’s Bazar District and Bhasan Char Island and in violence-affected areas of Burma to ensure access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities, prevent communicable disease outbreaks, and mitigate the risk of wasting—the deadliest form of malnutrition—in children ages five years and younger and pregnant and lactating women. With State/PRM funding, BRAC, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), IOM, Terre des Hommes Foundation, UNHCR, and UNICEF address critical WASH needs in Cox’s Bazar by improving drainage and waste removal systems, installing handwashing stations and latrines, providing hygiene supplies and safe drinking water, and strengthening community awareness of proper WASH practices to reduce the spread of disease.

CONTEXT IN BRIEF

- Burma’s military forces launched large-scale and indiscriminate military operations—which the USG has since characterized as genocide—in Rakhine’s Buthidaung, Maungdaw, and Rathedaung townships following Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army attacks on northern Rakhine checkpoints and police posts in October 2016 and August 2017. As of June 2023, more than 930,000 refugees—the majority of whom rely on humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs—were sheltering in Cox’s Bazar’s 33 refugee camps, including more than 700,000 who had fled Burma into neighboring Bangladesh since August 2017, UNHCR reports. Meanwhile, Government of Bangladesh policies limit refugees’ access to basic education services, capacity to engage in income-earning activities, and freedom of movement. Refugees and host communities in Cox’s Bazar are also vulnerable to natural hazards, such as cyclones and flooding. Additionally, the Government of Bangladesh had relocated approximately 30,000 refugees from Cox’s Bazar to Bhasan Char between November 2020 and June 2023.
- On February 1, 2021, Burma’s military staged a coup d’état against the civilian government during which soldiers detained senior civilian government officials, including State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi and President Win Myint, and announced a one-year state of emergency. In August 2021, military authorities extended the initial one-year state of emergency to August 2023. Since February 2021, clashes between the MAF, ethnic armed organizations, and other local non-state armed groups across Burma have persisted, resulting in continuous displacement and humanitarian needs, particularly in southeastern and northwestern Burma, as well as in Kachin and Shan. Coup-related instability has also resulted in access challenges, limited cash availability, and restricted banking operations, challenging the provision of assistance by relief actors at a time of significant humanitarian need.
- As of January 2021, an estimated 600,000 ethnic Rohingya—a minority group not recognized by Burma’s military forces and denied rights to citizenship, freedom of movement, and public services—remained in Rakhine. Many IDPs in Rakhine are Rohingya, including approximately 147,000 people affected by the 2012 clashes who remained displaced as of July 2023. In addition, approximately 78,000 civilians, mostly ethnic Rakhine, remained displaced in Rakhine and Chin states as of mid-March 2022 due to clashes between the Arakan Army and the MAF that erupted in 2018. Displaced populations, as well as other vulnerable individuals, continue to lack access to basic services and livelihood opportunities due to persistent violence and associated movement restrictions.

- On November 3, 2022, U.S. Ambassador Peter D. Haas issued a DHN for Bangladesh in response to the ongoing humanitarian needs among Rohingya refugees and affected host communities. Additionally, on February 3, 2023, U.S. Chargé d’Affaires Deb Lynn re-issued a declaration of humanitarian need (DHN)/disaster declaration for Burma due to the ongoing complex emergency. On May 15, U.S. Chargé d’Affaires Lynn issued a DHN for Burma due to the effects of Tropical Cyclone Mocha. Additionally, on May 16, U.S. Ambassador to Bangladesh Peter D. Haas issued a DHN for Bangladesh to respond to the immediate humanitarian needs of populations affected by Tropical Cyclone Mocha. USG partners are supporting cyclone-affected populations in Burma and Bangladesh with emergency food, shelter, and WASH assistance, as well as other critical relief commodities.

USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE BURMA AND BANGLADESH CYCLONE RESPONSE IN FY 2023¹

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	AMOUNT
FUNDING FOR THE CYCLONE RESPONSE IN BURMA			
USAID/BHA			
Implementing Partners	Humanitarian Coordination, Information Management, and Assessments (HCIMA), Health, MPCA, Nutrition, Protection, Shelter and Settlements, WASH	Chin and Rakhine	\$12,200,000
IOM	Health, MPCA, Protection, Shelter and Settlements, WASH	Chin, Magway, Sagaing, Rakhine	\$4,800,000
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING FOR THE CYCLONE RESPONSE IN BURMA			\$17,000,000
FUNDING FOR THE CYCLONE RESPONSE IN BANGLADESH			
USAID/BHA			
Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS)	MPCA	Chittagong District	\$250,000
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING FOR THE CYCLONE RESPONSE IN BANGLADESH			\$250,000
TOTAL USG FUNDING FOR THE BURMA AND BANGLADESH CYCLONE RESPONSE IN FY 2023			\$17,250,000

USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE BURMA–BANGLADESH REGIONAL CRISIS IN FY 2023^{2,3}

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	AMOUNT
FUNDING IN BURMA FOR THE REGIONAL CRISIS RESPONSE			
USAID/BHA			
Implementing Partners	Economic Recovery and Market Systems, HCIMA, Health, MPCA, Nutrition, Protection, Shelter and Settlements, WASH	Bago (East), Chin, Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Magway, Mon, Rakhine, Sagaing, Shan, Tanintharyi	\$16,250,000
IOM	HCIMA, Health, MPCA, Protection, Shelter and Settlements, WASH	Chin, Magway, Rakhine, Sagaing	\$8,150,000
OCHA	HCIMA	Countrywide	\$1,500,000
UNICEF	Nutrition, Protection, WASH	Bago (East), Chin, Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Magway, Mon, Rakhine, Sagaing, Shan, Tanintharyi	\$4,000,000
WFP	Food Assistance, Nutrition	Bago, Chin, Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Magway, Mon, Rakhine, Shan (North), Shan (South), Sagaing, Tanintharyi	\$50,000,000
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING IN BURMA			\$79,900,000
STATE/PRM			

Implementing Partners	Humanitarian Assistance—Multi Sector	Countrywide	\$7,200,000
UNHCR	Humanitarian Assistance—Multi Sector	Countrywide	\$7,200,000
TOTAL STATE/PRM FUNDING IN BURMA			\$14,400,000
TOTAL USG FUNDING IN BURMA			\$94,300,000
FUNDING IN BANGLADESH FOR THE REGIONAL CRISIS RESPONSE			
USAID/BHA			
WFP	Disaster Risk Reduction Policy and Practice (DRRPP), Food Assistance—Food Vouchers, Logistics Support and Relief Commodities; Nutrition	Cox's Bazar	\$98,800,000
	Program Support		\$30,960
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING IN BANGLADESH			\$98,830,960
STATE/PRM			
International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)	Humanitarian Assistance—Multi Sector	Cox's Bazar	\$1,200,000
IFRC	Health, Livelihoods and Economic Recovery, MPCA, Protection, Risk Management Policy and Practice (RMPP), WASH	Cox's Bazar	\$5,700,000
IOM	Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM), COVID-19 Response, Health, HCIMA, Livelihoods and Economic Recovery, Logistics Support, Monitoring and Evaluation, Protection, Shelter and Settlements, RMPP, WASH	Cox's Bazar	\$9,850,000
UNHCR	Humanitarian Assistance—Multi Sector	Cox's Bazar	\$34,400,000
UNICEF	COVID-19 Response, Education, HCIMA, Health, Monitoring and Evaluation, Nutrition, Protection, RMPP, WASH	Cox's Bazar	\$8,700,000
TOTAL STATE/PRM FUNDING IN BANGLADESH			\$59,850,000
TOTAL USG FUNDING IN BANGLADESH			\$158,680,960
REGIONAL FUNDING FOR THE BURMA AND BANGLADESH REGIONAL RESPONSE			
STATE/PRM			
IOM	Humanitarian Assistance—Multi Sector	Indonesia	\$650,000
UNHCR	Humanitarian Assistance—Multi Sector	Regional	\$900,000
TOTAL STATE/PRM REGIONAL FUNDING			\$1,550,000
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING FOR THE BURMA AND BANGLADESH REGIONAL CRISIS AND CYCLONE IN FY 2023			\$195,980,960
TOTAL STATE/PRM FUNDING FOR THE BURMA AND BANGLADESH REGIONAL CRISIS IN FY 2023			\$75,800,000
TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE BURMA AND BANGLADESH REGIONAL CRISIS AND CYCLONE IN FY 2023¹			\$271,780,960

¹ Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of July 13, 2023.

² Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. USAID/BHA and State/PRM funding includes funding for both refugees from Burma and asylum-seekers in the region, as well as IDPs inside Burma. Funding does not include USAID/BHA support for activities in Bangladesh that are not related to the Rohingya refugee response.

³ Estimated value of food assistance and transportation costs at time of procurement; subject to change.

⁴ USG funding for populations in Burma and Bangladesh affected by the violence in Rakhine totals nearly \$2.1 billion—including more than \$1.7 billion in Bangladesh and more than \$433 million in Burma—since the outbreak of violence in August 2017. This includes more than \$1 billion in State/PRM funding and more than \$1 billion in USAID/BHA funding for populations affected by the violence in Rakhine and other vulnerable populations. USG funding represents publicly announced funding as of July 13, 2023.

PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for disaster responses around the world can be found at [interaction.org](https://www.interaction.org).
- USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed, often in the affected region; reduce the burden on scarce resources, such as transportation routes, staff time, and warehouse space; can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietarily, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information can be found at:
 - USAID Center for International Disaster Information: [cidi.org](https://www.cidi.org)
 - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at [reliefweb.int](https://www.reliefweb.int).

USAID/BHA bulletins appear on the USAID website at [usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work](https://www.usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work)